LIBRARIES
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXZINES

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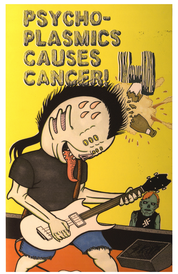
Abstract

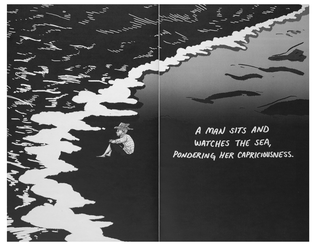
Zines are small, informal, non-professional publications; creative outlets devoted to idiosyncratic self-expression, and are often used by members of different minority groups and subcultures as methods of cultural expression and communication. By their very nature zines are hard to pin down, but distinguishing common characteristics of zines include a small circulation (sometimes via subscription but often distributed informally among interested parties) and a raison d'etre stressing free expression over profit. The zine collection started at the archives is designed to preserve these alternative voices and provide users a new and deeper understanding of different cultural experiences. This poster will show how zines in library and archival collections can be used as an effective medium for giving a voice to the joys, concerns and beliefs of outsider cultures and communities.



There are almost as many settings in which zines can be used as educational and informative tools as there are types of zines in general. Zines can and have been used as primary sources or objects of study in a number of fields, including:

- Art, art history, and art education
- Women's and gender studies
- African-American studies
- Latino/a studies
- Queer studies
- Sociology
- Popular culture studies
- Pop music history
- Literature

The TAMU Zine Collection – which currently consists of 158 individual items - includes personal observations, accounts, and opinions on all matter of subjects (aka *perzines*), cartoons, fiction, poetry, interviews, reviews, and more. The Collection thus reflects the wide variety of subject matter and presentation that zines have at their disposal.



Text for expansion on the collection

The Texas A&M University Zine Collection was started at Cushing in late 2012. It was designed, as zine archives often are, to serve as a regional "ark" for the preservation of creative, passionate voices that so often have gone unheard or underrepresented in mainstream culture and society. Although zines from other regions, authors and subjects are also included in the Collection, the fundamental collecting criteria remain:

- Zine concerning Texas, its borderlands, the Southwest and the South
- Zines created by Texans, Southwesterners or other Southerners
- Zines created specifically by racial, sexual or other minorities across Texas, its borderlands, the Southwest or the South
- Zines created by TAMU students or former students
- Artzines concerning printing and/or designed as print art objects

POC ZINE PROJECT

In conjunction with the development of the zine collection, the POC Zine Project's RaceRiot! brought their thought-provoking and visually stimulating multimedia event and panel discussion to the university in 2013, a part of a whirlwind tour throughout the United States. The Project panel includes a rotating roster of speakers who offer, through their own zines, a chronology and a partial history of the creative and intellectual production of people of color. The Project has received rave reviews and news write-ups throughout their travels.

The POC Zine Project's stated mission is to "make ALL zines by POC (People of Color) easy to find, distribute and share. We are an experiment in activism and community through materiality." It has a strong commitment "to being a welcoming and safe place of healing for people of color, both online and offline." It is a volunteer-based grassroots organization founded in 2010 by media activist Daniela Capistrano, and which strives to promote the continuity of the zine tradition of independent publication as well as the vibrancy of creative expression for people of color.

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